

Approved For Release 2002/05/20 : CIA-RDP79S01057A000500040044-6
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

TOP SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

DATE: March 28, 1952

SUBJECT: Interview with British Ambassador; Secretary's Presentation of Preliminary Views Concerning British Memorandum of March 15th regarding Indochina

PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary
Sir Oliver Franks, British Ambassador
Mr. Gibson, PSA

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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-61120-1

After the customary amenities, the Secretary proceeded to give response to the British memorandum of March 15th, point by point, as outlined in Mr. Allison's guidance memorandum of March 25th. After he had finished the Ambassador expressed his thanks and asked if he might summarize the Secretary's presentation in order to check. He did so as follows:

"We do not believe that the British concern regarding French intentions in Indochina is justified and cite Mr. Letourneau's comments made at his press conference March 12th to substantiate our point of view. We have no evidence that any of the rumors cited in the British memorandum as indications of French intention to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh or withdraw from Indochina are true. We would be gratified to have proof of any or all of them. If it were obtained we would consider it necessary to reconsider our policy concerning the French and Indochina generally. We believe that the French will stay in Indochina providing they have: (a) assurances of continued US military aid, (b) sufficient financial aid to assist them with that portion of their budgetary deficit attributable to the Indochina operation and, (c) reason to expect that a solution can be found to their manpower problem. It is suggested that this solution lies in the formation of national armies. We do not believe that the French are negotiating with Ho Chi Minh if only for the reason that Ho does not choose to negotiate and could not even if he wished to do so. We do not believe that the French are planning a withdrawal if only for the reason that such an operation couldnot be accomplished successfully without the assistance of the British and ourselves. We may therefore expect prior notice. We had hoped to be prepared to present more specific US views on the nature and extent of

retaliatory

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retaliatory action against Communist China following an identifiable aggression in Southeast Asia and other related subjects to the British by this time but have not yet been able to do so. We are finding it difficult to reconcile the proposed diplomatic and military courses of action. Progress is being made and it is hoped that something will be ready in the near future." (Note: Here the Secretary apparently had NSC-124 in mind although he made no direct reference to it.)

The Secretary confirmed to the Ambassador that these were our main points.

The Ambassador referred to the increasing concern in London with Southeast Asia. H.M.G. is concerned not only with the present precarious situation in the area, a concern which has been greatly accentuated in recent weeks by their suspicions of French intentions in Indochina, but also with the snowballing effects of any action which might follow a further Chinese aggression. The question of Korea is of course related to their concern.

The Ambassador then noted that the last Ad Hoc Military Committee's findings were a failure in that they resulted only in the presentation of three parallel sets of views which never met. The time is now fitting, in the opinion of H.M.G., to make a serious effort to reconcile US and UK views. It is therefore requested that we give urgent thought to the following proposal. A politico-military conference be held as soon as possible in which a limited number of British and American military and Foreign Office officials should take part. He spoke of himself, Mr. Matthews, General Bradley and Marshal Elliot. In answer to the Secretary's question he replied that he did not propose that the Joint Chiefs or any other group be brought from London in order to participate. He believes that the conversations should be concerned with the hypothesis that the Chinese Communists would commit an overt aggression in Indochina, that we were resolved to oppose that aggression and that our objective was to combat the aggression itself and not necessarily to overthrow the Chinese Peoples Republic. On that basis we would concern ourselves with the following two considerations: (a) the kind of retaliatory action which we are able to take and its expected effectiveness, and (b) an assessment of what would be the results of the retaliatory action in bringing the Sino-Soviet pact into operation.

The Ambassador stated that H.M.G. believes that any Chinese aggression could be countered not only where it takes place but also, to a limited degree, at the base of the enemy's operations in China without bringing the Sino-Soviet pact into operation. The question to be determined, however, arises out of the difference of opinion between the UK and the US as to where that limit is to be found.

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The Ambassador emphasized that it is suggested these discussions were to be carried on without any commitment of any kind by either government.

In commenting on the Ambassador's suggestion the Secretary noted that the studies of the last Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Tripartite Military Conference had not achieved their purpose because the British participants were hampered by the fact that they gave first consideration to the policy questions behind any proposed military action while the American representatives thought only of the effectiveness of the action without considering policy at all. He said that there had not been enough advance thought concerning the subject on either side.

The Secretary stated in closing that he would make the British proposal known to the appropriate American officials on Monday, March 31st, and hoped to be able to give the Ambassador a prompt reply.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY

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April 21, 1952

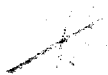
MEMORANDUM

To: CIA, Mr. Loftus E. Becker
Deputy Director, Intelligence

Lofty,

The attached memorandum of conversation will, I think, be of interest, but we must again request the special limited distribution. For your information the Secretary has delayed response to the British proposal for informal US-UK talks on the subject pending completion of NSC-124, although at the present reading it looks as though our response would be favorable.


The memorandum referred to in the Secretary's conversation was the one discussed in the Allison-Tomlinson conversation of March 15, the memorandum on which I left with you a few weeks ago.


Fisher Howe
Deputy

Attachment:

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MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SMITH MR. DULLES		TOP SECRET Security Information Noted by DCI 4/24 - Dec
<p>I think you will be interested in this record of conversation between Sec. Acheson and the British Ambassador re French position in Indochina and Southeast Asia as a whole.</p> <p>NSC 124, referred to in the conversation, is the paper on US objectives and courses of action in Southeast Asia which is presently under reconsideration by the NSC Staff.</p>		
Will also pass to, on "Eyes Only" basis:		
DD/P ✓	all noted msh	
AD/NE ✓		
AD/CI ✓		
TOP SECRET Security Information		23 April 1952 (DATE)
FORM NO. 10-101 JAN 1952 (47)		

25X1A

Executive Registry

26 March 1952 ²⁻⁶⁷⁷⁶⁶

MEMORANDUM TO: Director of Training

FROM : Executive Officer, Deputy Director/Intelligence

SUBJECT : Designees to Selection Board, Foreign Service Institute

REFERENCE : Memo from Director of Training to Deputy Director/Intelligence, dated 10 March 1952

1. Confirming telephone notifications of 21 March (O/DTR) and 25 March (O/DTR, [REDACTED]), the following are the subject designees:

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a. From O/IE:

b. From O/CI:

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[REDACTED] 25X1A

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
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CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
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AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE 4-19-80 REVIEWER: [REDACTED]

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